

Important Election Information for the 2012 Presidential General Election

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Columbia, Maryland October 22, 2012 – For the 2012 Presidential General Election, voters can vote in person or by absentee ballot. To vote in person, a voter can vote before election day at a designated early voting center in Howard County **or** vote on election day at the polling place for his or her residence.

Early voting centers will be open for voting from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm on Saturday, October 27th and Monday, October 29th through Thursday, November 1st and 12:00 noon to 6:00 pm on Sunday, October 28th. The early voting centers(s) in Howard County are located at Ridgely' Run Community Center, 8400 Mission Rd, Jessup, MD 20794; The Bain Center, 5470 Ruth Keeton Way, Columbia, MD 21044; and Ellicott City Senior Center, 9401 Frederick Rd, Ellicott City, MD 21042. Howard County voters may vote at the designated early voting centers. Addresses, driving directions and photographs of all of the early voting centers are available at www.elections.state.md.us/voting/early_voting.html.

Voters who prefer to vote on election day can vote on **Tuesday, November 6, 2012**. On election day, polling places will be open for voting from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm. To avoid delays, voters should try to vote between the hours of 10:00 am and 4:00 pm.

Voters can review a sample ballot before going to vote. Sample ballots are mailed to each voter and are available at www.elections.state.md.us (click the "Look up your voter information" box).

Where Do I Vote?

During early voting, voters should vote at a designated early voting center in Howard County. There are three in Howard County, and each center is located at an accessible facility with adequate parking and within a convenient driving distance for most of the voters of the county. Information about the early voting centers and early voting in general is available at www.elections.state.md.us/voting/early_voting.html.

On election day, voters should vote at the polling place to which they are assigned. A voter can find his or her assigned precinct by looking at the voter notification card or sample ballot he or she received from the Howard County Board of Elections or by visiting www.elections.state.md.us. If a voter moved and did not update his or her address with the local board, the voter should visit www.elections.state.md.us and search for the polling place for his or her new address or contact the local board of elections. It is important for the voter to vote in the polling place for his or her new address, as only those contests for which the voter is eligible to vote will be counted.

How Do I Vote?

All voters in Maryland use the same voting system. For early voting and polling place voting, voters use a touchscreen voting system. Instructions will be available for voters to familiarize themselves with the ballot and how to vote. Voters are encouraged to bring with them the sample ballot they receive in the mail. Voters may also ask an election judge to

explain how to vote on the voting system, but a voter must vote alone, unless the voter is unable to do so because of disability, inability to write, or inability to read the ballot.

For absentee and provisional voting, voters are issued a paper ballot. Voters fill in the ovals next to the candidates or ballot question responses for which they want to vote. At the local board of elections, the ballot is fed into an optical scan voting unit, which reads and tabulates the selections made by voters. **All** provisional ballots and absentee ballots are considered in a public meeting after the election and counted or rejected according to State law and regulation.

How Can I Get an Absentee Ballot?

The deadline to request an absentee ballot is **Tuesday, October 30, 2012**. Starting Wednesday, October 31st through election day, voters must request an absentee ballot *in person* at the Howard County Board of Elections. The absentee ballot application is available at www.elections.state.md.us/voting/absentee.html.

Voted absentee ballots may be delivered to the Howard County Board of Elections by 8:00 pm on election day **or** postmarked on or before election day and received by the Howard County Board by Friday, November 16, 2012. **All** absentee ballots are reviewed, regardless of whether the absentee ballots will impact the outcome of an election.

What is a Provisional Ballot?

A provisional ballot is a safeguard to ensure that an individual who believes that he or she is registered and eligible to vote is able to vote. If a voter is required to vote by provisional ballot, the voter will be asked to complete a provisional ballot application and issued a paper ballot. It is important that the voter complete the entire provisional ballot application, as the information on the application is used to determine whether the provisional ballot will be counted.

All provisional ballot applications are reviewed, regardless of whether the provisional ballots impact the outcome of an election. A provisional ballot will only be counted after the Howard County Board of Elections has reviewed the provisional ballot application and determined that the individual is in fact registered and eligible to vote the provisional ballot. A provisional ballot is **not** an alternative to the electronic voting system. Additional information about provisional voting is available at www.elections.state.md.us/voting/provisional_voting.html.

Additional election dates and information about the 2012 General Election are available at www.elections.state.md.us/elections/2012/index.html. For more information, voters may contact the Howard County Board of Elections at 410-313-5820 or the State Board of Elections at 1-800-222-VOTE (8683).

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